SKETCHES

IN

NORTH AMERICA

AND THE

OREGON TERRITORY.

BY

CAPTAIN H. WARRE,

(A. D. C. to the late Commander of the Forces.)

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THE

GOVERNOR, DEPUTY GOVERNOR, AND COMMITTEE

OF THE

HONOURABLE THE HUDSON'S BAY COMPANY,

THIS WORK

IS RESPECTFULLY DEDICATED, BY THEIR OBEDIENT HUMBLE SERVANT,

HENRY J. WARRE.

Features of t
Country.

Rivers, &c.

Aborigines.

ACROSS THE

CONTINENT OF NORTH AMERICA

FROM

CANADA TO THE OREGON TERRITORY AND PACIFIC OCEAN.

"No chart nor journey's plan
In woods required, where strained eye was keen
As eagle's of the wilderness to scan
His path, by mountain, swamp, or deep ravine,
Or ken far friendly huts on good savannas green."

CAMPBELL.

I LEFT Montreal on the 5th May, 1845, in company with Sir G. Simpson, the Governor of the Honorable Hudson's Bay Company, Lieutenant V——, an Officer of the Royal Engineers, and several gentlemen connected with the Hudson's Bay Company, who were proceeding to their respective stations in the territory belonging to the Fur Company, to which Sir George Simpson was about to make his annual tour of inspection.

We embarked in two large canoes, made of the bark of the white birch tree, and paddled by fifteen Canadian and Indian "voyageurs," whose merry voices made the forests re-echo with their "chansons."

Our route, in the first instance, was by the Ottawa river, which we ascended to its junction with the Matawa river, from which we crossed the height of land dividing the tributaries of the Ottawa from lake Huron; coasted along the Northern shore of this lake, through lake Superior to the river Kemanis-taquoih, at the North-Western extremity; ascended this river, through the lake of the Woods, Rainy Lake, &c.; down the river Winipeg, across the Southern end of lake Winipeg to Red river, and arrived at Fort Garry (vide sketch No. 1), the principal establishment of the Hudson's Bay Company, on the 7th June, having accomplished a distance of 2300 miles in one month, notwithstanding the numerous impediments arising from falls and rapids in the different rivers, round which we were obliged to transport the canoes, provisions, &c., on men's shoulders.

Features of the Country.

The country, through which we have passed, varies but little in its general features. The Northern shores of lakes Huron and Superior are bold and rocky, thinly covered with pine timber; which, of a greater or less size, also covers the banks of the rivers. The land generally is nearly valueless for cultivation; but the shores of these lakes are said to be rich in minerals, particularly copper and silver. The citizens of the United States have worked the veins of copper with great success on the South shore of lake Superior. They find the ore in great abundance near the surface, and of excellent quality and pureness.

Westward of lake Superior, a greater variety of trees shews a decided improvement in the nature of the soil; but the country is very flat, liable to floods, and intersected by a succession of lakes of great magnitude, but usually studded with innumerable rocky islands, rendering it difficult, in the imperfect surveys of the country, to define their proper limits.

The shores of lake Superior are bold and picturesque, frequently presenting perpendicular scarps of 2 or 300 feet of basaltic formation. The forests are often very beautiful, but very dense, on the banks of the rivers, which causes great difficulty in transporting the canoes, &c., where it is necessary to make what is usually termed a "portage," and frequently occurs when falls or rapids interrupt the free navigation, or when necessary to carry the canoe from one river or lake to another.

Rivers, &c.

The rivers are impeded by innumerable rapids and falls, many of which are extremely grand and picturesque. That of the Kamanis-taquoih, which I have selected in the accompanying series of sketches, is particularly beautiful, tumbling in awful grandeur over a ledge of rock 170 feet in depth into a narrow gorge, the silent forest alone re-echoing the roar of the cataract. (Vide sketch No. 2.)

Aborigines.

Between Canada and Red river, the native Indians are reduced, by sickness and other causes, to less than one-third of their former numbers; they are dependent for their supplies of food and clothing on the several trading establishments of the Hudson's Bay Company, who afford protection to the miserable remnants of these once powerful tribes. We traversed their country unmolested, and without even a thought of the possibility that their cupidity might overcome their natural awe of the white man.

Animals.

Elk, bears, lynx, wolves, foxes of every color, beaver, sable, martins of every kind, and many other smaller animals, were formerly very numerous in this part of the country.

The aborigines entrapped the elk for food, and hunted the bear as proof of their prowess and to obtain the skin, which they wear during the winter months.

When the white trader appeared, the improvident Indian assisted to destroy the animals on which he had depended; no sooner was this effected than he found himself not only deprived of his former means of existence, but dependent upon those who had introduced luxuries hitherto unknown, and created new wants, the possession of which he was now no longer able to obtain.

In less than half a century not only have the herds of wild animals disappeared, but wars, consequent upon the opposition of rival traders, and disease, have reduced the once noble Indian to a degraded "dram drinking" savage, willing to barter all that man holds most dear, even to the chastity of his "squaw," for the much loved "fire water," as they call spirits.

Red River Settlement

The settlement of Red river contains about 5000 inhabitants, scattered a distance of 40 miles, on either bank of the stream, which is navigable for large boats from lake Winipeg to Fort Garry, the principal establishment of the Hudson's Bay Company, situated at the junction of the Assiniboine river.

The most numerous class of "habitans" are the hardy native hunters and voyageurs, born of native women, and usually called "half breeds." They are but little addicted to agriculture, and spend hours, during the long winter of this inclement region, in smoking, dancing, and gambling.

The Scotch and their descendants are the most respectable and the most industrious of the settlers, and grow more than sufficient wheat, &c., for their own consumption; the surplus is sold to the Company, to supply their trading posts throughout the country.

The soil on the banks of the river is productive in wheat, barley, &c.; but the country generally is flat and swampy, offering little to attract the eye, or tempt the industry, of even the most persevering husbandman. It is not my intention minutely to describe this settlement, so ably noticed by Sir George Simpson and his late nephew, Mr. Simpson, in their clever and interesting works on this country. I must haste my departure from our very hospitable hosts at Fort Garry, and continue our journey across the vast undulating prairies, and over the magnificent range of lofty mountains (forming the back bone of America), to the Pacific Ocean.

Journey continued on horseback.

Every arrangement having been completed by the 16th of June, Lieut. V—— and myself, accompanied by Mr. Ogden, a chief trader in the Company, Mr. Lane, a clerk, and twelve men, selected from the hardy class of half breeds and Canadians, commenced our arduous journey on horseback, nor did we reach fort Colville, on the Columbia river, a distance of nearly 1600 miles, till the 12th of August. Want of space, unfortunately, will prevent my entering into the various details of this journey, the difficulties of which can readily be imagined, when it is understood that our luggage and provisions were conveyed nearly the whole distance on horseback, and that we were constantly surrounded by savage Indians, who own no submission, save to the superior strength or prowess of the party they encounter. Our daily journeys commenced with the early morn—a compass our only guide! and ended where a sufficient supply of wood and water could be obtained to prepare our frugal meal—a tent our only covering!!

Western Prairies.

Between the Red river and the Rocky mountains, the country presents a vast extent of undulating prairie, (nearly denuded of timber,)

intersected by lakes and swamps of various extent. These prairies are frequented by vast herds of buffaloe, who migrate during the seasons North and South, and afford food and subsistence to large tribes of Indians, who follow their migrations, and wage constant war on each other, or on the white traders. Unlike the Indians of the more civilized country, East of Red river, these tribes yield submission to no one, their proximity to the frontier of the United States affording them protection, of which they are cunning enough to avail themselves, should the British trader attempt to retaliate for injuries and robberies effected. They are abundantly supplied with horses, which they purchase, steal, and obtain by various means, from the more Southern tribes! I can imagine nothing more picturesque and more perfectly graceful than a Blackfoot Indian in his war costume, decorated with paint and feathers floating wildly in the wind, as he caracoles on his small, but wonderfully active barb, in the full confidence of his glorious liberty. War, his occupation; and the scarcely less hazardous and exciting chase of the buffaloe, his amusement. (Vide sketches No. 3 and 4.)

Buffaloe hunting, &c. The excitement attendant upon hunting the buffaloe must be enjoyed to be appreciated. Over hill and dale you follow on horseback, at full speed, these enormous unwieldy looking animals, and fire only when sufficiently near to be certain of your mark.

Bears, wolves, foxes, and various kinds of carnivorous animals, accompany the herds of buffaloe, living upon their carcasses, when the ball of the hunter or other accident destroys these monsters of the prairies; while numbers of eagles, vultures and buzzards, float through the atmosphere, ready to assist at the demolition of the carcase.

Wild Animals. Elk and antelope abound in many parts of the plains; the latter graceful little animal often fall victims to their curiosity, their fleetness rendering it almost an impossibility, except by stratagem, to bring them within range of the rifle. In order to effect this, the hunter must be concealed by some inequality of the ground, and holdir small bright colored flag or handkerchief in the air, wave it to and The antelope will gradually approach, and thus falls an easy prey.

Trading Posts, or Forts. The Hudson's Bay Company have several small forts or trading posts (built of wood and surrounded by strong palisading, having blockhouses armed with small cannon at the angles). We called at three of these posts, between Red River and the Rocky Mountains, in order to exchange our horses.

At each of these stations large droves of horses are kept, concealed as much as possible from the Indians.

From fort Edmonton, on the Saskatchawan river, we took a more Southern course, through the heart of the Blackfoot country (our most formidable enemies), in order to reach a pass in the Rocky Mountains, which afforded the easiest and most practicable passage. (Vide sketch No. 5.)

Indians. We were often on the qui vive, from false alarms about hostile Indians, but by the precautions taken, we escaped without any actual encounter.

On the morning of the third or fourth day after leaving fort Edmonton, our guide discovered that Indians were in our path, and as it is usual in this country to consider all as enemies till they prove friends, we galloped forward, leaving a few men to protect the baggage, and found a large tribe of Indians, drawn up to resist our attack. As they were accompanied by their women and children (certain sign that they were not a "war party"), we held a "*talk*," and discovered, to our satisfaction, that they belonged to the tribe of "Crees," who have always been friendly to the white traders. Distributing some few presents of tobacco, beads, &c. among them, we continued our journey; nor was it till the following year that we heard the sad fate of these harmless people, who, on the day after we parted with them, encountered a "war party" of Blackfoot Indians, who had been following our party, to endeavour to steal our horses. The Blackfeet attacked these Indians, killed several of the men, and took the women and children prisoners, leaving but few to tell the tale!

The Rocky Mountains. Our passage over the magnificent range of lofty mountains was not accomplished without much difficulty, and at a fearful sacrifice of the noble animals that aided us in the transport. (Vide sketches Nos. 6 and 7.) We left fort Edmonton with *sixty* horses; on our arrival at fort Colville, on the Columbia river, we had only *twenty-seven*, and several of these were so exhausted, they could not have continued many more days. The steepness of the mountain passes, the want of proper nourishment, the fearful falls that some of these animals sustained, rolling in some instances many hundred feet into the foaming torrent beneath, combined to cause this great loss. The scenery was grand in the extreme, similar in form to the Alps of Switzerland, [illegible]

The mountains are said to be very rich in minerals, but our rapid transit would not admit of a very close examination. I saw specimens of copper, lead, and of that which had all the appearance of silver, giving proof of the abundance of these metals; I broke off a small piece of mica slate which was completely studded with small garnets.

West of the Rocky Mountains. 1st section. The country on the West of the Rocky Mountains to the Pacific Ocean may be divided into three distinct sections; that near the base of the Rocky Mountains being very much broken by lofty ranges of mountains, partially covered with pine trees, and containing, in the rich alluvial valleys, great varieties of fine trees.

2nd section. The adjoining section, extending for 4 or 500 miles to another range of mountains, parallel with the sea coast and distant from it about 150 miles, is perfectly denuded of timber, and the face of the country presents an uninterrupted range of sandy desert, on which even the wild animals cannot exist, and bearing very recent traces of volcanic action.

3rd section. The third or sea coast section contains as fine land and larger trees than any country in the world, and has been settled within the last five years by enterprising citizens of the United States, who have braved the dangers of the transport across the desert, at a fearful sacrifice of life and property, and are now cultivating farms of great richness and beauty, bordering on the Pacific Ocean.

From fort Colville my party descended the Columbia river in boats, to the Pacific Ocean, a distance of 700 miles, which we reached on the 25th August, having in less than four months traversed the whole continent of North America. (Vide sketches Nos. 8, 9, 10 and 11.)

The Oregon Territory. During the winter's residence in the Oregon Territory and on the coast of the Pacific Ocean, we employed ourselves in visiting all the accessible parts of the country. Having obtained horses from the Hudson's Bay Company, we crossed the forest and prairie land between the Columbia river and Puget's Sound, on the North. Hiring canoes from the native tribes, we coasted through this beautiful inland sea, and traversed the Straits of St. Juan de Fuca to Vancouver's Island, on which the Hudson's Bay Company have lately established a trading post, where their vessels, which are annually dispatched from England with stores, &c. to carry on the trade with the Indians, will in future land their cargoes, and receive in return the valuable peltries.

To the South of the Columbia we visited the American settlement on the banks of the river Willamette (of which I shall hereafter give a rapid sketch), and extended our tour through this beautiful undulating fertile country to the borders of North California, examining in our course the great channels of communication which in the present untrodden state of the country are almost exclusively confined to the numerous navigable streams and rivers, or exploring the depths of the magnificent forests on their banks.

On the occasion of our visit to Vancouver's Island we were most fortunate in meeting Her Majesty's ships "*America*," 50, Capt. Hon. C. Gordon, and the "*Modeste*," 18, Capt. T. Baillie, by whom we were most kindly and hospitably received. The "*Modeste*" subsequently entered the Columbia, and "wintered" opposite fort Vancouver (vide sketch No. 9), the principal establishment of the Hudson's Bay Company West of the Rocky Mountains, situated 110 miles from the mouth of the river.

The friendship and hospitality shewn to Lieut. V—— and myself, by Capt. Baillie and his officers, during our long residence in this distant land, is still remembered by me with feelings of the liveliest gratitude, and I cannot resist returning them my heartfelt thanks for the many happy days passed in their society and on board their ship. To the gentlemen connected with the Hon. Hudson's Bay Company, I must also be permitted to offer my acknowledgments, for the facilities they afforded us in travelling about the country; and we were most cordially welcomed to the wooden walls of fort Vancouver, when obliged to seek shelter from the perpetual rain, which commenced in November and continued with little intermission till the following March.

I have already mentioned that the country West of the Rocky Mountains may be divided into three natural and distinct sections. I have nothing further to remark upon that portion situated near the base of the mountains, which is too remote for present civilization, although possessing soil capable of cultivation, and great mineral wealth. Still less can be said in favor of that intermediate portion forming the centre of the Territory, where the barrenness of the soil, the total absence of wood and water, completely exclude all hope of its ever being adapted to the wants of man! But that fertile section, divided from this barren desert by a range of lofty mountains, running

latitude can be compared to this fertile region. The climate is rather above the average heat in summer, but in winter the cold is seldom more severe than in the Southern part of our own country.

Wheat, barley, rye, oats, peas, beans, potatoes, and all kinds of vegetables, are cultivated with facility, and yield a vast return even in the present rude state of agriculture; whilst the numberless small prairies, perfectly denuded of timber, but surrounded by belts of beautiful trees of every variety, offer advantages, but rarely found, to early settlers, whose health and spirits are usually broken in the first cultivation of land, by the difficulties they encounter in cutting down the trees, and preparing the ground for receiving the grain.

Whether we regard the enormous size of the timber (I have seen *an hundred* trees together whose average girth is from twenty-five to thirty feet), the magnificence of the rivers, the height and beauty of the distant mountains—capped with perpetual snow—or the luxuriance of the undulating country at their base, we have a prospect as wonderful for the growth of its productions as for the beauty of its scenery.

Animals of all kinds propagate their species with amazing fecundity. But twenty or twenty-five years ago, the arrival of a horse at Fort George, at the mouth of the Columbia river, attracted thousands of Indians from the surrounding country, to witness the extraordinary phenomenon. At the present moment individual Indians possess upwards of 1000, and the vast prairies in the interior are overrun with horses become perfectly wild.

Cattle and sheep, in the same manner, were brought in the first instance from California, and the former are now running wild through the woods.

The fisheries are most abundant: salmon and sturgeon are, in the seasons, the most numerous and most sought after; but every little stream abounds with trout and other fish. The Indians spear and net the salmon and sturgeon in the summer, which they smoke and preserve for the winter's consumption.

The Willamette Settlement

In the year 1829 three or four Canadians, retired servants of the Hudson's Bay Company, settled on the banks of the river Willamette, near the beautiful falls, where there is now, in 1846, a flourishing village (vide sketches Nos. 12 and 13), with two churches, and 100 houses, store houses, &c. all of which have been built within five years. The first American immigration poured into the country in 1840. Having with infinite labour and great loss, both of human and animal life, traversed the Rocky Mountains, and crossed the vast sandy desert, they arrived in the country at the commencement of the winter season, without provision or covering of any description; they threw themselves on the hospitality of the Hudson's Bay Company's agents, who most kindly relieved their immediate wants, and afforded them every assistance towards their future settlement. This immigration was followed in the succeeding years by still more numerous bands of Western backwoodsmen, who settled themselves in this luxuriant valley, and established a form of government similar to that of the Western territories of the United States. The Hudson's Bay Company were so completely overruled by the number of Americans, that they were obliged to join in this compact, which neutralized their authority in the country where they had been long respected by the native tribes, and obliged them to subscribe to the laws of the very people whose settlement and occupation of the land they contributed so generously and largely to effect.

The Columbia river.

The Columbia river takes its rise in the Rocky Mountains, is upwards of 1000 miles in length, and falls into the Pacific Ocean in latitude 45·30. The river is navigable for about 100 miles for vessels of large tonnage, but the entrance is obstructed by a bar, through which the channel is very tortuous, and renders the navigation extremely dangerous. (Vide sketch No. 14, Cape Disappointment.)

Fort George, ("Astoria.")

Fort George (vide sketches Nos. 14 and 15) is situated on the South bank of the river, about twelve miles from its mouth. On the spot where the present fort is situated was formerly built "*Astoria*," of which Mr. Washington Irving has written so interesting an account.

The Cowelitz River.

On the banks of the Cowelitz river is situated a very flourishing farm and settlement belonging to the Hudson's Bay Company, who in 1841 transported, free of expense, as many of their settlers at Red River as could be induced to migrate to this distant land. The position of these farms, situated in plains, extending for miles along the river bank, and surrounded by the lofty mountains running parallel to the sea coast, is very beautiful; but the soil is not very rich, and the want of fresh water is a serious evil.

Puget's Sound.

Puget's Sound, forming a continuation of the straits Juan de Fuca, is a beautiful inland sea, the immediate banks of which offer many difficult access, on account of the strength of the tides and force of the currents, that they are almost useless for purposes of navigation.

Vancouver's Island.

Vancouver's is a beautiful island, 250 miles long, by about 50 in breadth, with a very numerous Indian population. The surface of the country is varied, and has many advantageous points for settlement and cultivation; but the soil is very scant, and the rock approaches so near the surface, that with the exception of some of the alluvial valleys, which are of no great extent, I doubt whether the island can ever be brought into a high state of cultivation. The climate is very similar to that of England, but hotter during the summer months. There is also a great scarcity of fresh water on the island.

The Indian population.

The Indian population of the whole of this territory West of the Rocky Mountains have been so reduced by disease and the constant wars between neighbouring tribes, that they are no longer formidable to the white trader. They may be classed in two divisions: those of the sea coast and of the interior. The former are the most numerous; they subsist chiefly on salmon and sturgeon, which swarm the rivers in incredible numbers during certain seasons; their houses or huts are very dirty, and their personal appearance is not prepossessing: their foreheads are flattened in their youth, till the head has the appearance of a wedge; they will sell or exchange everything they possess for rum or spirits, and are a cowardly, thievish, cunning race. The women are more industrious than the men, and manufacture a very durable kind of blanket, from the wool of the mountain goats and a peculiar breed of white dogs which infest their "wigwams;" they also make very useful mats and baskets from the wild rushes, and bark of cedar.

The Indians of the interior are a much finer race of beings than their brethren of the sea coast. Accustomed to make long journeys upon horseback, they rove about the country, living upon buffaloe or other wild animals, and fighting with their neighbours in the endeavour to steal their horses. They are always at war. You meet them as enemies, and with this understanding the weaker party will always avoid a stronger, unless they are tempted by their stealing propensities to endeavour, under cover of darkness, to gain by stealth that which they dare not take by force. We had several casual encounters with the Indian tribes, but being continually on our guard, we escaped with the loss only of one or two horses.

The Indians of the sea coast bury their chiefs in their canoes, with all the articles they possessed when living, for their domestic purposes, suspended to their graves.

The tomb (vide sketch No. 9) from which I have taken the sketch, was most picturesquely situated on the banks of the river Cowelitz. The Indian died in the prime of life, and on his death bed declared, in obedience to the frightful superstitions of his ignorant race, that a chief of a neighbouring tribe had caused his death, and desired his relatives to be revenged! His two brothers, immediately on his decease, went in search of this chief, killed him, and having burnt his body, brought the ashes and deposited them in the tomb; they then slaughtered their brother's favorite horse, destroyed his blankets, &c., which are hung in tatters over the grave, and nailed the tin pans, &c., to the sides of the canoe, which had been perforated in several places to prevent the possibility of its being again made use of. These marks of ceremony are to do honor to the deceased, and to ensure his comfort in the world to come.

Residence in the Oregon Territory.

The passage of the Rocky mountains was not considered practicable till the beginning of May, on account of the depth of the snow in the country lying at their base, which would render it impossible to transport the baggage, provisions, &c., sufficient for our party, for so great a distance over the frozen surface. We were, therefore, obliged to delay our departure on our homeward journey till the end of March, which would allow time for the ascent of the Columbia river, and enable us to reach the boat encampment, from whence, we were to commence the ascent of the mountains, at the proper season.

The festive seasons at Christmas and New Year were not unregarded in this distant land. The officers of H. M. S. *Modeste* contributed largely to promote feelings of friendship between the settlers from the United States and the subjects of Great Britain; and they were ably supported by the agents of the Hudson's Bay Company, whose families joined in the merry dance, and reciprocated the dinners which were given on board the ship. The deck was fitted up as a theatre, and many plays and farces were most inimitably performed by the sailors, among whom were some capital actors.

Hunting with the "lasso" the wild cattle, which are very numerous on many of the adjoining plains, was a constant amusement, and

The antelope will gradually approach, and thus falls an easy prey.

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The heat during the day was very great; but the nights were often very cold, as we ascended to the level of the perpetual snow. The stings and bites of the mosquitoes and flies were painful to a degree; it is impossible to describe the irritation and positive agony caused by the perseverance of these venomous little insects.

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Neither England or any other country within the same degrees of

the salmon and sturgeon in the summer, which they smoke and preserve for the winter's consumption.

The Willamette Settlement

In the year 1829 three or four Canadians, retired servants of the Hudson's Bay Company, settled on the banks of the river Willamette, near the beautiful falls, where there is now, in 1846, a flourishing village (vide sketches Nos. 12 and 13), with two churches and 100 houses, store houses, &c. all of which have been built within five years. The first American immigration poured into the country in 1840. Having with infinite labour and great loss, both of human and animal life, traversed the Rocky Mountains, and crossed the vast sandy desert, they arrived in the country at the commencement of the winter season, without provision or covering of any description; they threw themselves on the hospitality of the Hudson's Bay Company's agents, who most kindly relieved their immediate wants, and afforded them every assistance towards their future settlement. This immigration was followed in the succeeding years by still more numerous bands of Western backwoodsmen, who settled themselves in this luxuriant valley, and established a form of government similar to that of the Western territories of the United States. The Hudson's Bay Company were so completely overruled by the number of Americans, that they were obliged to join in this compact, which neutralized their authority in the country where they had been long respected by the native tribes, and obliged them to subscribe to the laws of the very people whose settlement and occupation of the land they contributed so generously and largely to effect.

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Fort George (vide sketches Nos. 14 and 15) is situated on the South bank of the river, about twelve miles from its mouth. On the spot where the present fort is situated was formerly built "*Astoria*," of which Mr. Washington Irving has written so interesting an account.

The Cowelitz River.

On the banks of the Cowelitz river is situated a very flourishing farm and settlement belonging to the Hudson's Bay Company, who in 1841 transported, free of expense, as many of their settlers at Red River as could be induced to migrate to this distant land. The position of these farms, situated in plains, extending for miles along the river bank, and surrounded by the lofty mountains running parallel to the sea coast, is very beautiful; but the soil is not very rich, and the want of fresh water is a serious evil.

Puget's Sound.

Puget's Sound, forming a continuation of the straits Juan de Fuca, is a beautiful inland sea, the immediate banks of which offer many advantageous sites for settlement; they rise gradually in the rear till they become lofty mountains, many of which are capped with perpetual snow.

The harbours on the South shore of the straits Juan de Fuca are very fine, and would afford protection to any number of vessels; but they are, as is the case on every part of the coast, very imperfectly supplied with fresh water. The various channels or "canals," (as they are usually called,) dividing Vancouver's Island from the main shore, are of so

to steal their horses. They are always at war. You meet them as enemies, and with this understanding the weaker party will always avoid a stronger, unless they are tempted by their stealing propensities to endeavour, under cover of darkness, to gain by stealth that which they dare not take by force. We had several casual encounters with the Indian tribes, but being continually on our guard, we escaped with the loss only of one or two horses.

The Indians of the sea coast bury their chiefs in their canoes, with all the articles they possessed when living, for their domestic purposes, suspended to their graves.

The tomb (vide sketch No. 9) from which I have taken the sketch, was most picturesquely situated on the banks of the river Cowelitz. The Indian died in the prime of life, and on his death bed declared, in obedience to the frightful superstitions of his ignorant race, that a chief of a neighbouring tribe had caused his death, and desired his relatives to be revenged! His two brothers, immediately on his decease, went in search of this chief, killed him, and having burnt his body, brought the ashes and deposited them in the tomb; they then slaughtered their brother's favorite horse, destroyed his blankets, &c., which are hung in tatters over the grave, and nailed the tin pans, &c., to the sides of the canoe, which had been perforated in several places to prevent the possibility of its being again made use of. These marks of ceremony are to do honor to the deceased, and to ensure his comfort in the world to come.

Residence in the Oregon Territory.

The passage of the Rocky mountains was not considered practicable till the beginning of May, on account of the depth of the snow in the country lying at their base, which would render it impossible to transport the baggage, provisions, &c., sufficient for our party, for so great a distance over the frozen surface. We were, therefore, obliged to delay our departure on our homeward journey till the end of March, which would allow time for the ascent of the Columbia river, and enable us to reach the boat encampment, from whence, we were to commence the ascent of the mountains, at the proper season.

The festive seasons at Christmas and New Year were not unregarded in this distant land. The officers of H. M. S. *Modeste* contributed largely to promote feelings of friendship between the settlers from the United States and the subjects of Great Britain; and they were ably supported by the agents of the Hudson's Bay Company, whose families joined in the merry dance, and reciprocated the dinners which were given on board the ship. The deck was fitted up as a theatre, and many plays and farces were most inimitably performed by the sailors, among whom were some capital actors.

Hunting with the "lasso" the wild cattle, which are very numerous on many of the adjoining plains, was a constant amusement, and not unattended with personal danger; these animals are extremely fierce, and often became the attacking party, in which case we were obliged to trust to the speed and activity of our horses.

The wild fowl and snipe shooting was also very good. The number of swans, geese, ducks, widgeon of every variety, were incredible; but the lakes, on which these birds congregated, are very large, rendering them difficult to approach.

Return to Canada.

On the 25th March, we took leave of our many kind and hospitable

friends, and commenced our homeward journey. Several of the Hudson's Bay Company's servants, whose term of servitude had expired, and who were desirous of returning to their native land, increased our party to about thirty; we were distributed in two large boats, laden with every variety of store for the Indian trade of the interior country, which we deposited at the different forts or trading posts we passed, in the ascent of the river.

The ascent of the rapid current of the Columbia was very tedious; we could seldom average more than 25 or 30 miles a day; and often, where the river was more than usually impeded with falls and rapids, we could not even accomplish this distance.

We reached "Les Dalles" on the 29th, a distance of 80 miles from Fort Vancouver, having made the "portage" of the beautiful falls 40 miles below, called the "Cascades." At the point called "Les Dalles," the river has been obstructed in its approach to the sea, by a broad strata of basaltic rock, rising nearly 100 feet above the usual level of the ground, through which the water has forced a narrow passage of nearly a mile in length, and not more than 100 feet in breadth. During the Spring season, when the snow melting on the mountains increases the quantity of water, this magnificent river is kept back till it is said to rise above 60 feet, forming itself into a large lake above the barrier, and forcing itself through the narrow gorge with a terrific force. The view of Mount Hood (vide sketches Nos. 17 and 18) from this point is very beautiful, rising to a height of nearly 16,000 feet, and covered with its dazzling mantle of perpetual snow.

We arrived at Fort Walla Walla, a distance of 200 miles, on the 3rd April, and here obtained horses to ride across the country to fort Colville, leaving the boats to continue their more circuitous course by the river to the same point, about 450 miles. The direct route to fort Colville is about 250 miles, 200 of which are through a barren sandy desert, comparable only with the Great Sahara in Africa, during the passage of which we could hardly find sufficient wood or water to supply our most ordinary wants, or sufficient nourishment to afford a scanty meal to our half famished horses. The country is intersected by deep ravines, scarped with perpendicular basaltic rock, which obliged us to make very long detours before we could find a point that afforded even a dangerous crossing. In many instances these ravines formed the bed of a rapid river, which only increased our desire for water, which, within view, was the more tempting, from being unattainable. The whole region presents most interesting and peculiar features to a geologist; has evidently been subject to extraordinary volcanic action, and great convulsions of nature, by which the channel of the Columbia river has been diverted from its course, the original bed remaining barricaded by rocks which have been thrown across the entrance, and have converted it into a dry level ravine, called "La Grande Coulée." The Peloos river has an early subterranean course through one of these deep ravines, leaping from one surface of the land to another, till it gains the level of the Columbia by a perpendicular fall of 200 feet, into a circular basin of basaltic rock, forming one of the most perfect and beautiful specimens of the basaltic formation I have ever seen. The beauty of the scene is very feebly described in the accompanying sketch. (Vide sketch No. 19.)

At Fort Colville we again embarked in boats to ascend the Upper Columbia river to the Boat Encampment, a distance of 250 miles. We abandoned the boats at this point, and commenced, on foot, the ascent of the Rocky Mountains.

We had for many days been surrounded by magnificent mountains, and had passed through such a beautiful country, that the effect of this grand and solitary scene (vide sketch of the Rocky Mountains, No. 20) was partially destroyed, by the sublimity of that which had preceded it. The mountains are about 10,000 feet in height, unequalled in any part of Switzerland for the ruggedness of their peaks and beauty of form, capped and dazzling in their white mantle of snow.

Our pedestrian labors now commenced. For three days we continued the ascent of the valley of the Canoe river, wading twenty times in the course of each day through this mountain torrent, landing on the snow, which covered the whole country, and over the half thawed surface of which, we dragged the heavy lumbering, but well adapted, shoe, that prevented our being submerged at every step; at night we formed our couch on the snow, without an opportunity being afforded to us of drying our saturated garments, or being able to pitch our tent to guard against the cold. On the fourth day we ascended the "*Grande Côte*" to the height of land on which are situated two small lakes, from whence flow two rivers, the waters of which fall into different oceans—the Columbia into the Pacific, and the Athabasca into the Frozen ocean. The fatigue of mounting nearly 5000 feet on the soft snow, which sank, even with the snow shoes, nearly to the knees at every step, can hardly be conceived. We were obliged to follow one another in file, and relieve the leading file every ten minutes, by which means the road was formed for the carriers, whose endurance, under their heavy burdens, was wonderful.

We were now in the very heart of the mountains, which rose several thousand feet on every side of us. "Avalanches" of snow and rock were detached under the influence of the mid-day sun, and rolled across our path into the valley beneath, threatening to engulph us in their overwhelming course.

At the Boat Encampment the provision of dried meat had been divided; each man carried his own share in addition to his regular burden. From want of forethought, and dislike to additional weight, they had not taken sufficient, and their provisions began to fail. We were not fortunate enough to kill a mountain sheep or goat, or even an elk, whose traces were very apparent in the snow, and some of which usually fall victims to the skill of the hunters. On this the men relied; and we found ourselves in the unenviable position of being obliged to share our last meal with the hungry men, whose strength also began to fail under the excessive exertion, without sufficient nourishment. On the 7th day our provisions were completely exhausted; having divided our last mouthful, I started forward with two men, to make our way to Jaspar's house, a small station of the Hudson's Bay Company on the Atthabasca river, and distant about 60 miles. We had, however, scarcely walked 10 miles, when the joyful sound of human voices assured us of more immediate relief, and we soon encountered a party of men who had been sent to meet us with provisions, accompanied by Le Père de Smit, a jesuit priest from Belgium, and chief of the Roman Catholic missionaries in the Columbia district, who was on his return to that part of Oregon. He had attempted during the winter to visit the Blackfoot Indians, but had failed, and very nearly fell a victim to his temerity and zeal. The horses had been left some distance below, not being able to get through the snow; but several sledges drawn by dogs were laden with pemican and other provisions, on which our men made a most abundant meal.

Our letters had also been forwarded by this express; and although the melancholy account of the death of my poor uncle and general, Sir R. Downes Jackson, the Commander of the Forces in British North America, threw a gloom over my otherwise satisfactory correspondence, I could not but feel thankful that he was the only one of those who are near and dear to me who had died during the twelve months we had been shut out from receiving any intelligence.

In four days we reached Jaspar's house, and left the horses, to embark in boats to descend the Atthabasca river, the current of which was so rapid that in two days and a half we reached fort Assiniboine, a distance of nearly 400 miles. Here we again took horses to travel overland to fort Edmonton, on the Saskatchawan river (about 100 miles), which we accomplished in less than three days; many of the men were becoming knocked up by such constant exposure and hard work; we therefore obtained a fresh crew at fort Edmonton, and embarked on the Saskatchawan river, which we descended to fort Carlton, a distance of about 500 miles. Here we again took horses to ride across the prairies to Red River (about 450 miles), which we accomplished in ten days, the weather being wet, cold, and disagreeable. We arrived at fort Garry on the 7th June, in seventy-three days from the time we left Vancouver. We have in this time completed a journey of 2500 miles, notwithstanding the various means of conveyance and innumerable obstacles we had to encounter.

The Indians.

The Indians on the Columbia river are generally a quiet, inoffensive people; they have been very much reduced in numbers by disease and the constant wars that are waged upon them by their more powerful neighbours on the adjoining prairies, who wander about, without any fixed place of residence. Such are the Blackfoot, the Snake, the Cayeuse, and other very large tribes, who always appear to be at war with their fellow creatures. These tribes occupy vast tracts of country on either side of the mountains. The Assiniboines and Cree Indians are also powerful tribes on the Saskatchawan river, but live in constant fear of their neighbours, the Blackfeet.

We encountered about 5000 Assiniboine and Cree Indians encamped, in three separate villages, on the banks of the Saskatchawan river. On the day we visited them they had lost three of their "*braves*" in an encounter with Blackfeet, who had surrounded the camps, to attack any of their opponents who ventured in search of game.

We also but narrowly escaped falling their victims, the Blackfeet having surrounded our boat at night to the number of seventy or eighty. We were fortunately aroused from our sleep by our watchful steersman, who alone remained awake to guide the boat, which we had allowed to float down the river to save the delay that occurs by encamping on the shore. We were all sleeping upon our ready loaded guns, and quickly were prepared for defence; but so soon as these savages found that they were discovered, they decamped, not relishing a warm reception from the guns "that fire twice."

The banks of the Saskatchawan were covered with buffaloe, elk, and antelope, with their attendant wolves, bears, and carnivorous beasts and birds of every kind.

We fared most sumptuously on the flesh of the buffaloe and upon numberless good things that Mr. Rowand had supplied us with at fort

Edmonton. We killed a great many buffaloes on our journey to Fort [illegible] and were restrained from shooting more than was sufficient to [illegible] our party by the utter worthlessness of the animal when killed. [illegible] deer, antelope, and wild fowl of all kinds, fell victims to our [illegible] and added to our more than usually abundant repasts.

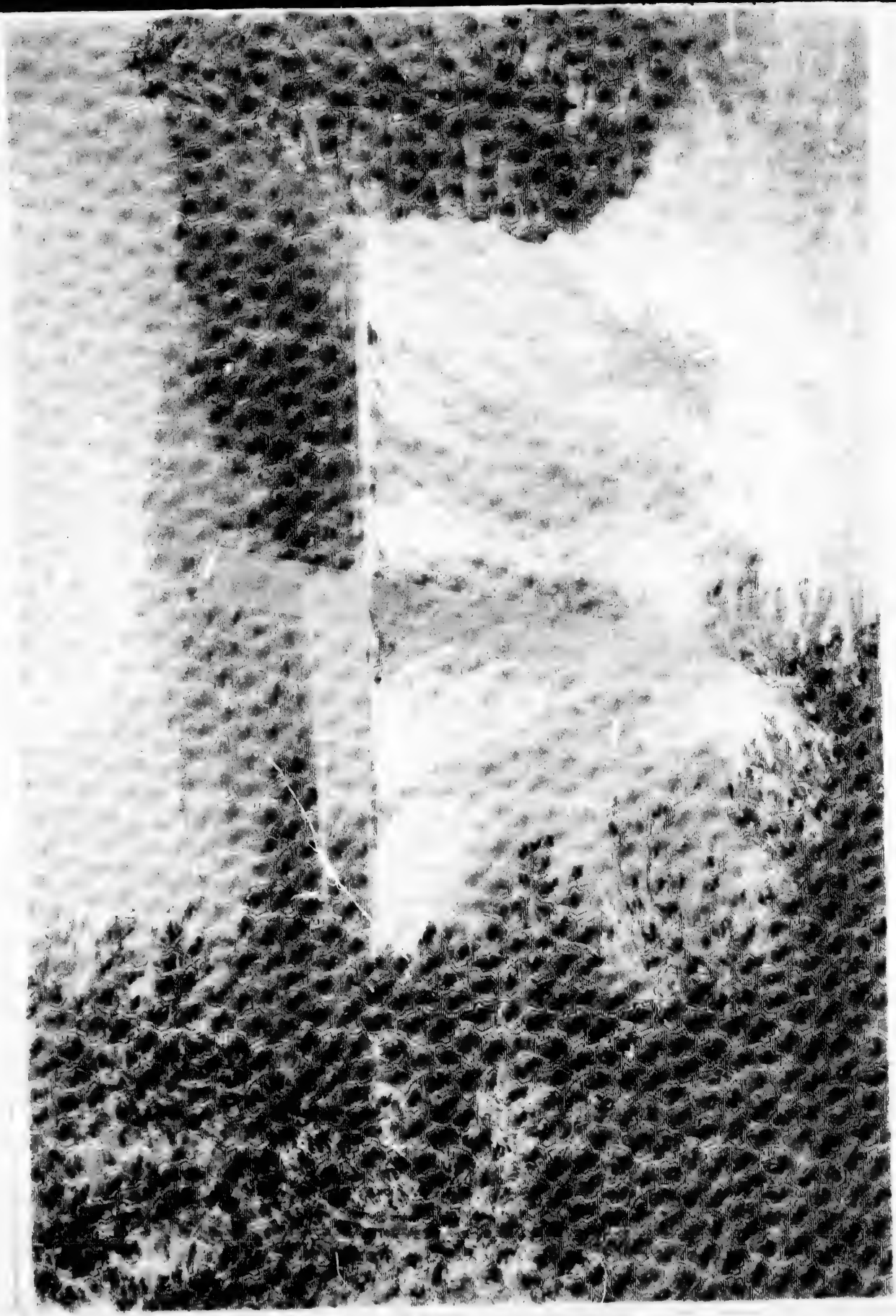
Sir George Simpson arrived from Canada on the afternoon of the 7th June, bringing us letters and news from the civilized world to the beginning of May.

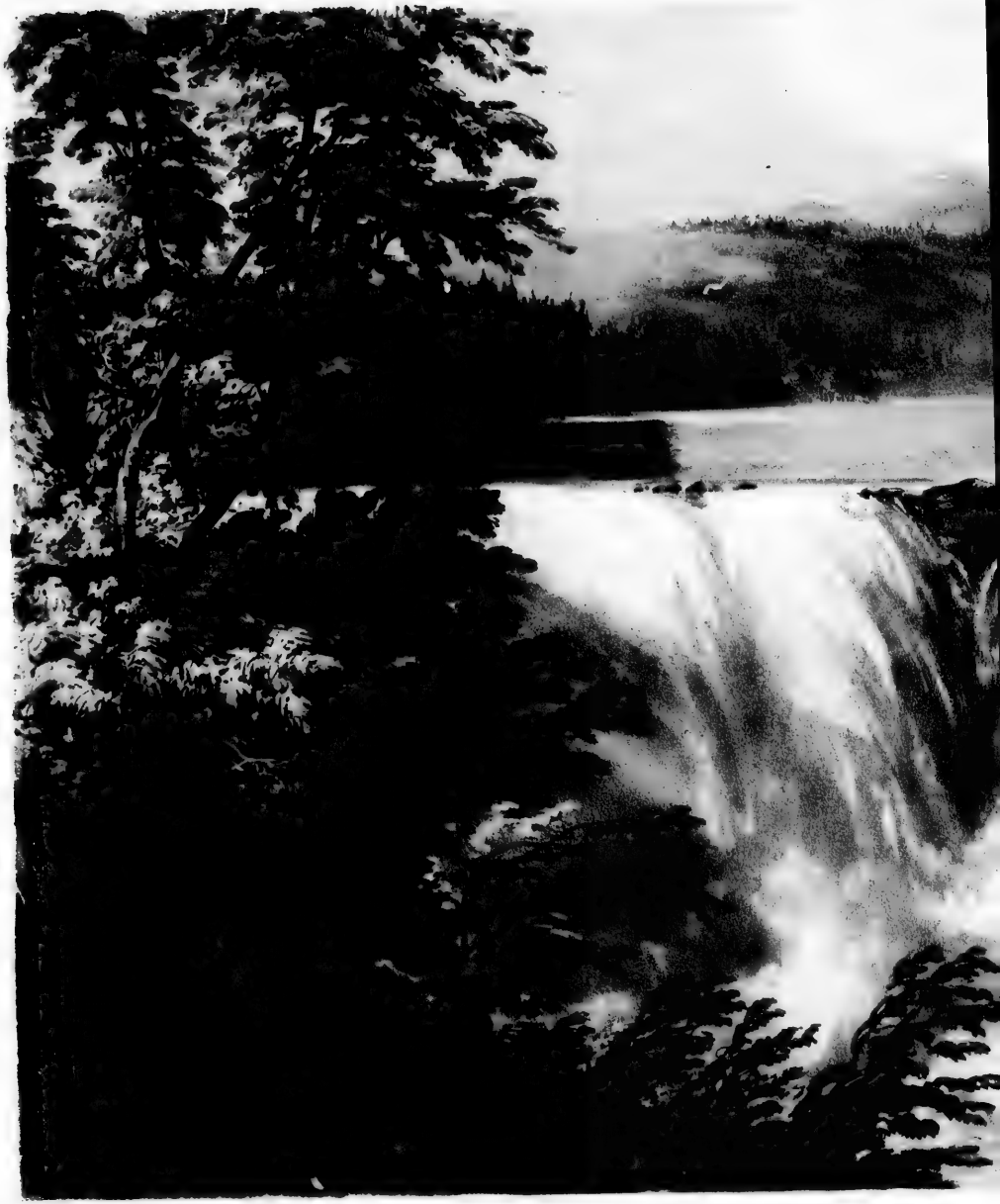
We remained at fort Garry a few days to recruit our weary frames, and then embarked in the Governor's canoe, and descended with all possible dispatch by the same route that we last year ascended, through Lake Superior to the South St. Marie, where we embarked on board an American steamer and continued our voyage through lakes Huron, Erie and Ontario, down the St. Lawrence to Montreal, where we arrived on the 20th July, after an absence of more than 14 months.

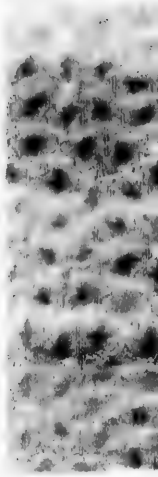
I paid a passing visit to the beautiful falls of Niagara, which appear more splendid the oftener you revisit them.

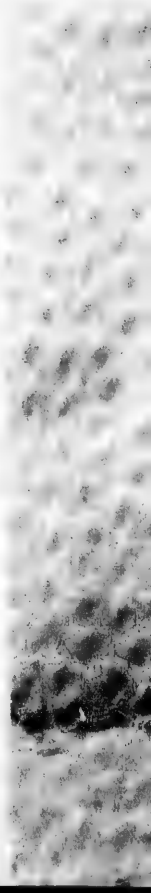
On the 30th July I left Montreal, crossed the St. Lawrence river by steamer to La Prairie, from thence by railway to St. John's, through lake Champlain, in the lake steamer "*Burlington*," to Whitehall; by coach to the baths of Saratoga, thence by rail to Albany and Boston, through the beautiful New England states, which contrasted strangely in their cultivation with the wild lands through which I had lately passed.

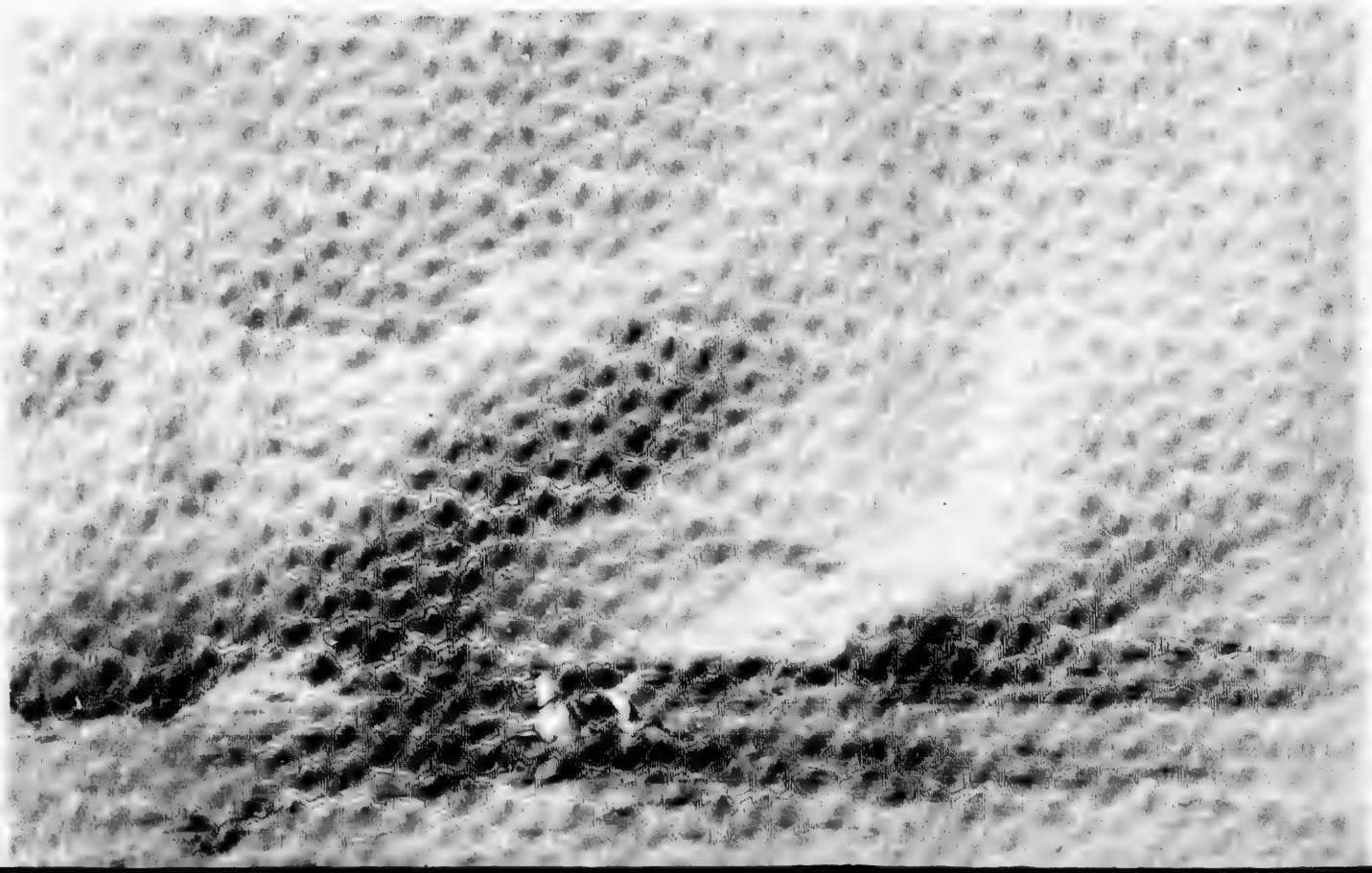
At Boston I embarked in the Royal Mail Company's steamer, "*Cambria*," Capt. Judkins, and sailed for England on the 1st August. After a delightful passage, calling at Halifax en route, we arrived at Liverpool on the 12th August, having made one of the fastest passages then on record between the Old and New World.

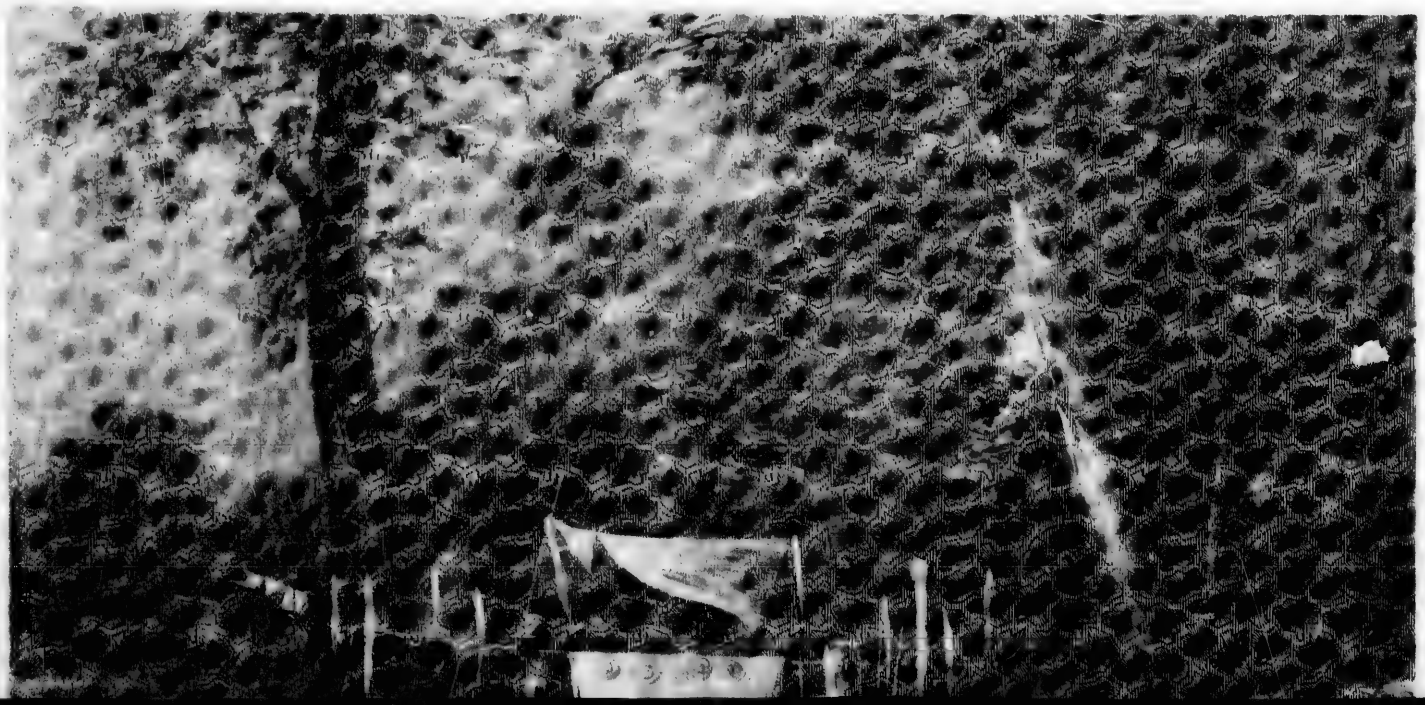


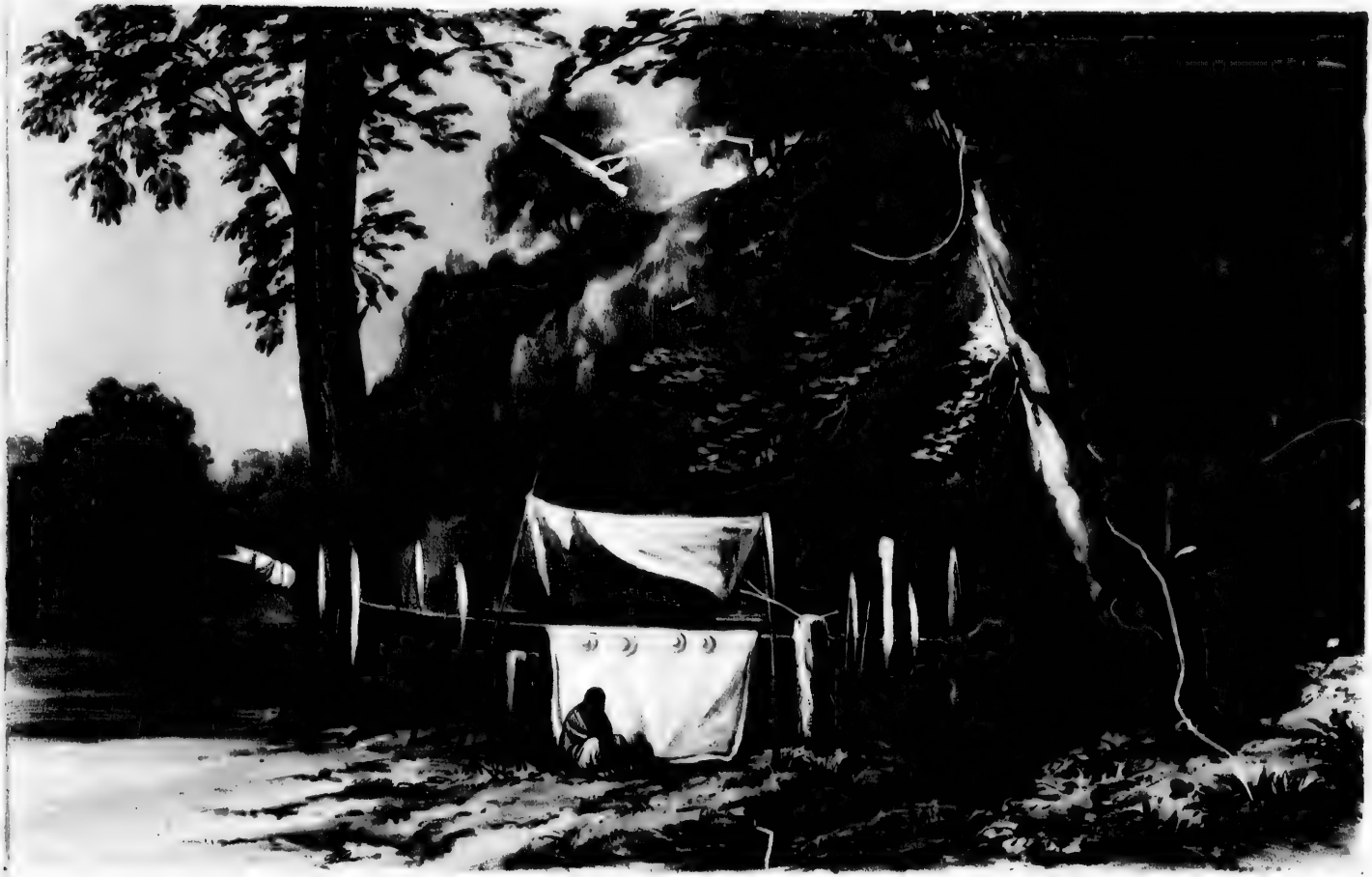


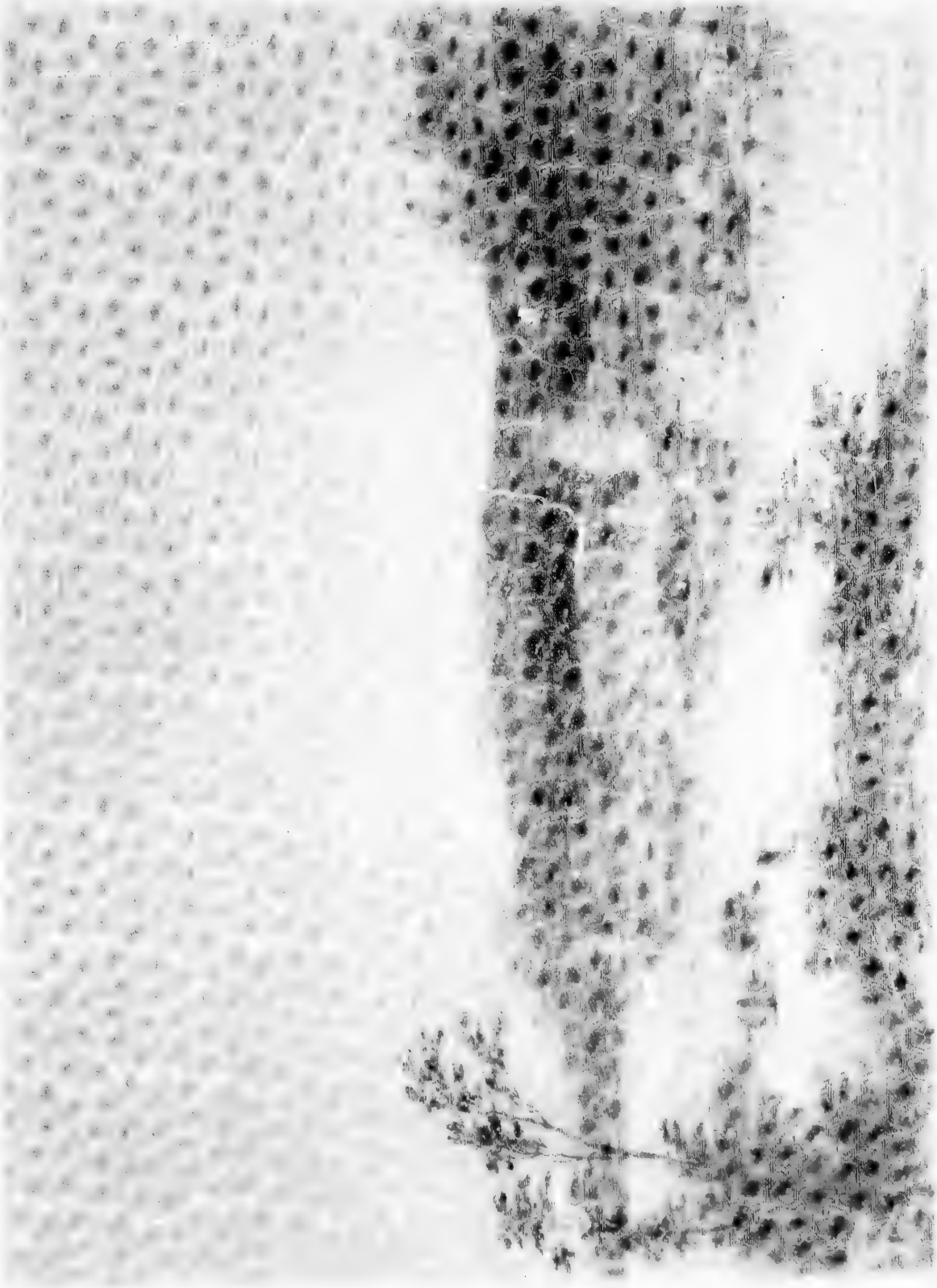


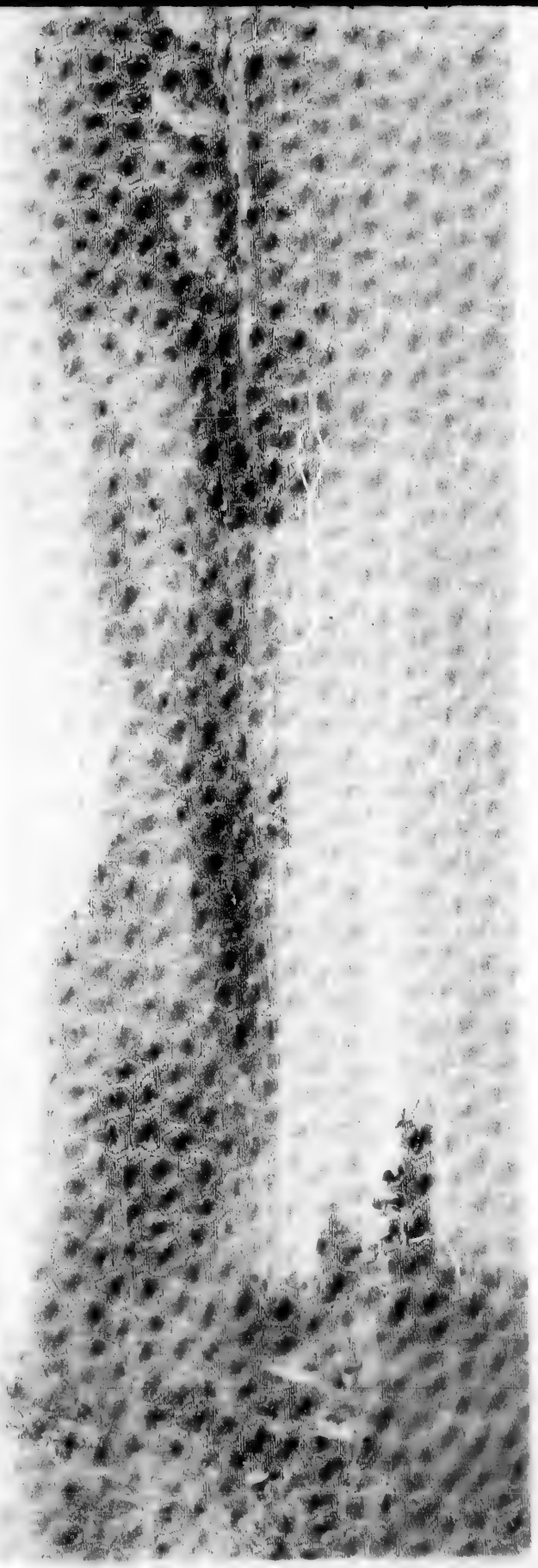


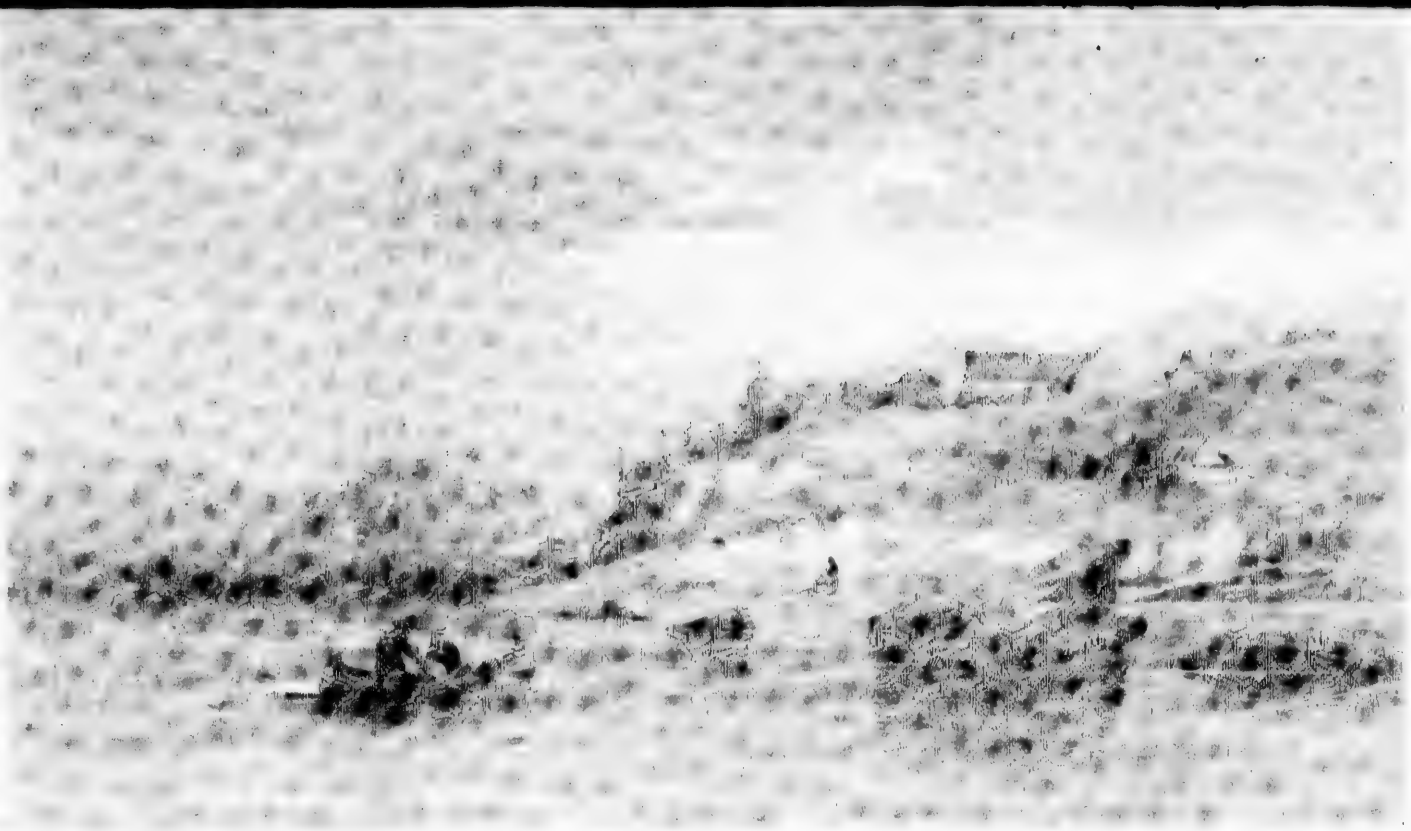


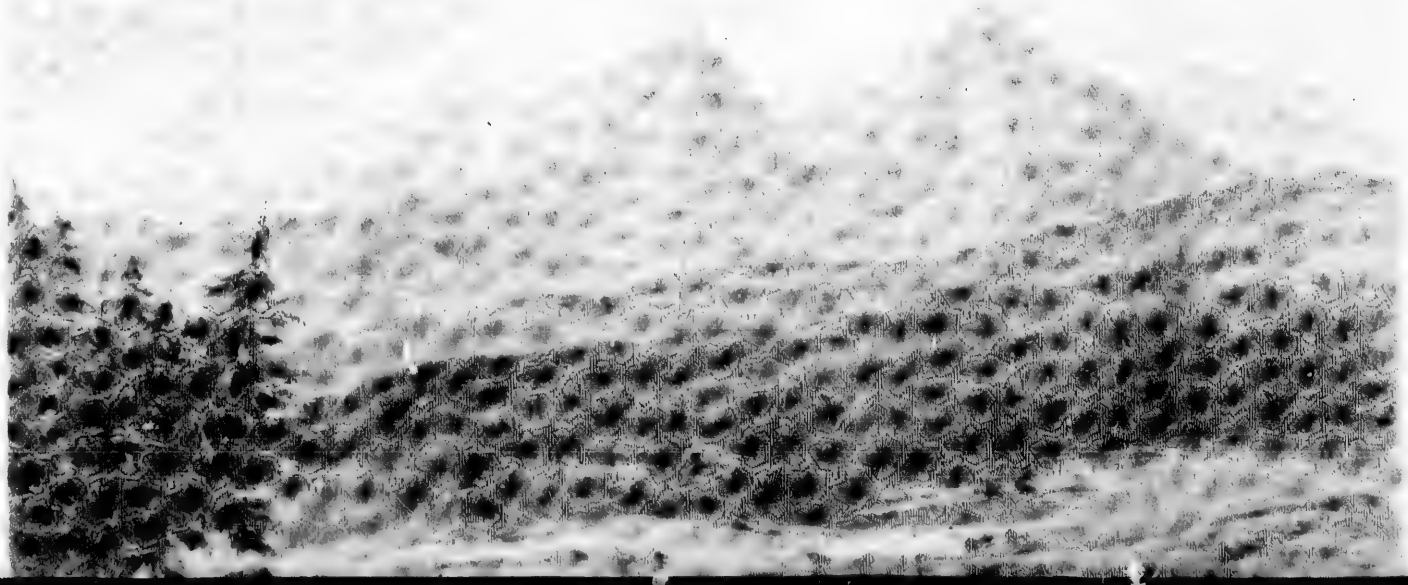












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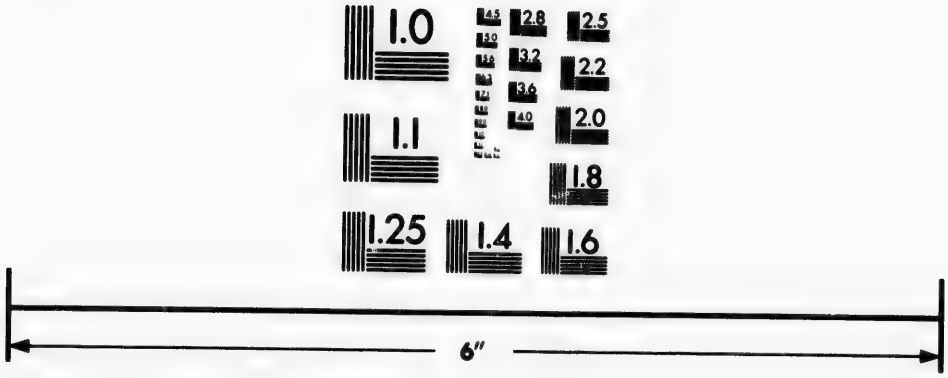

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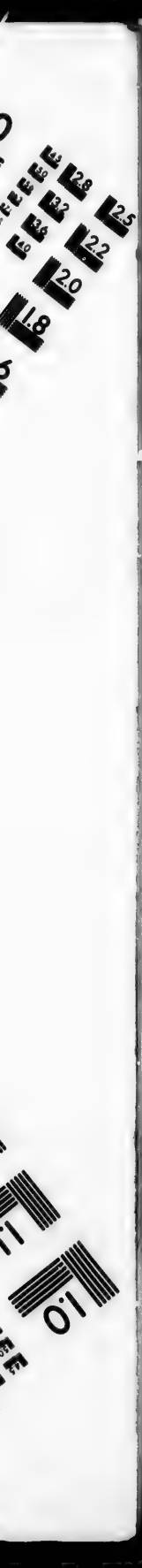
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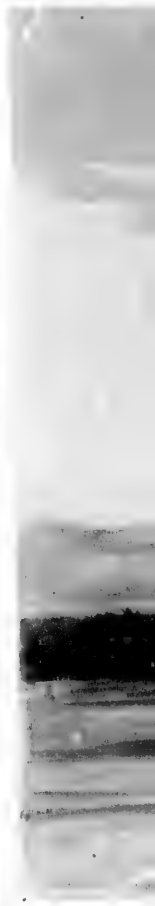

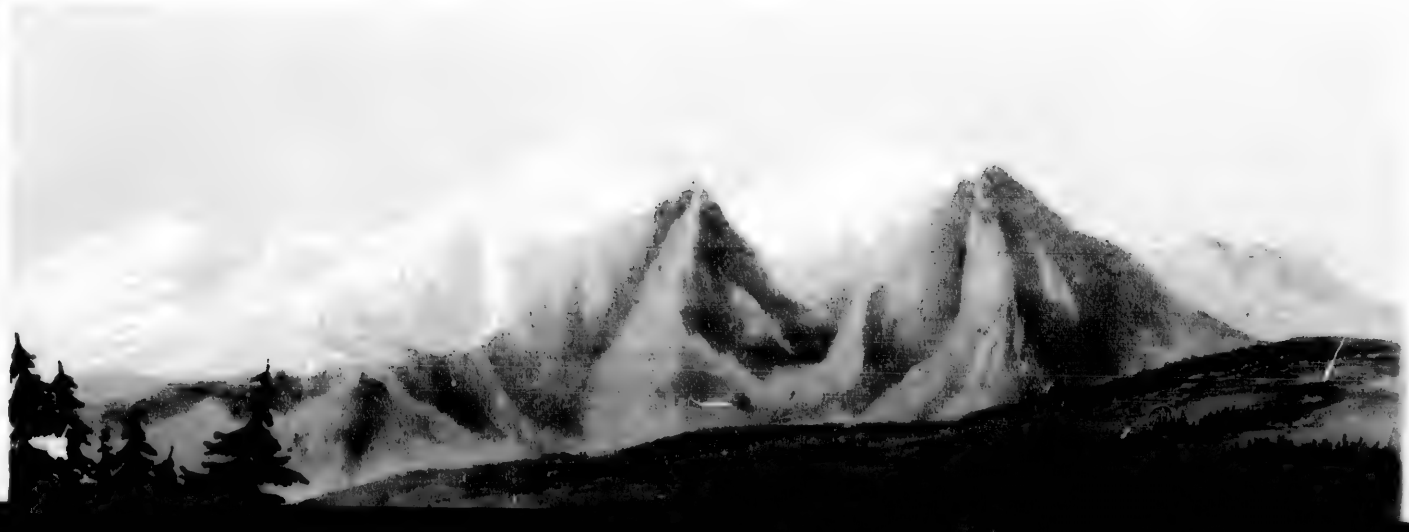

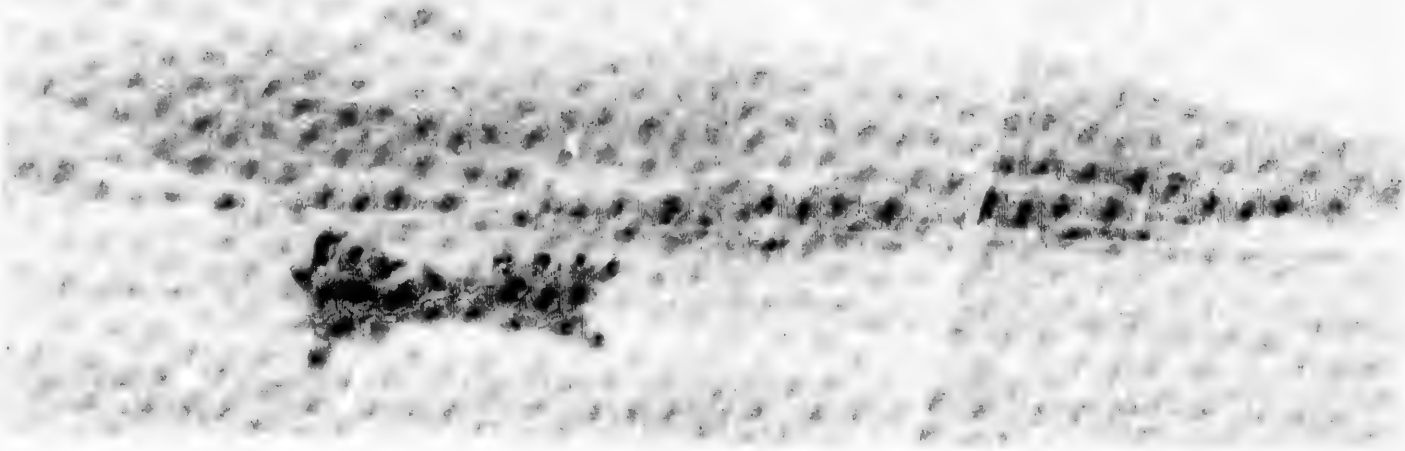

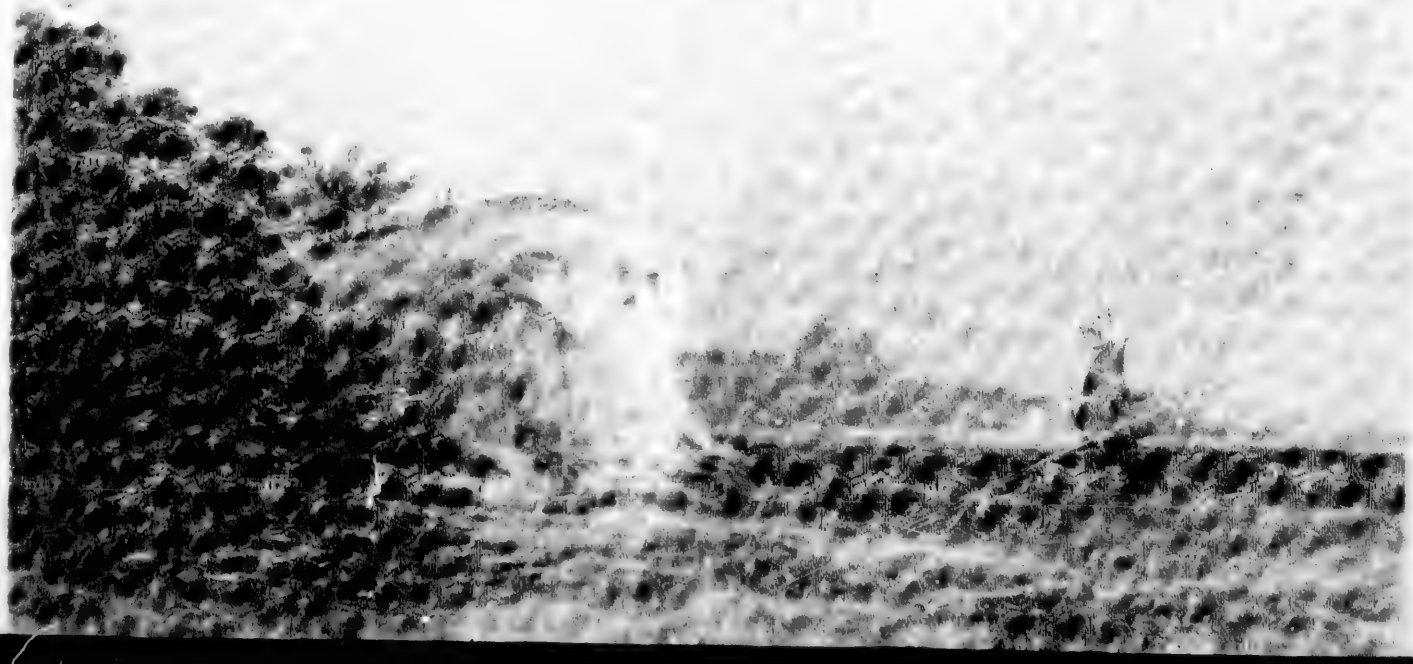

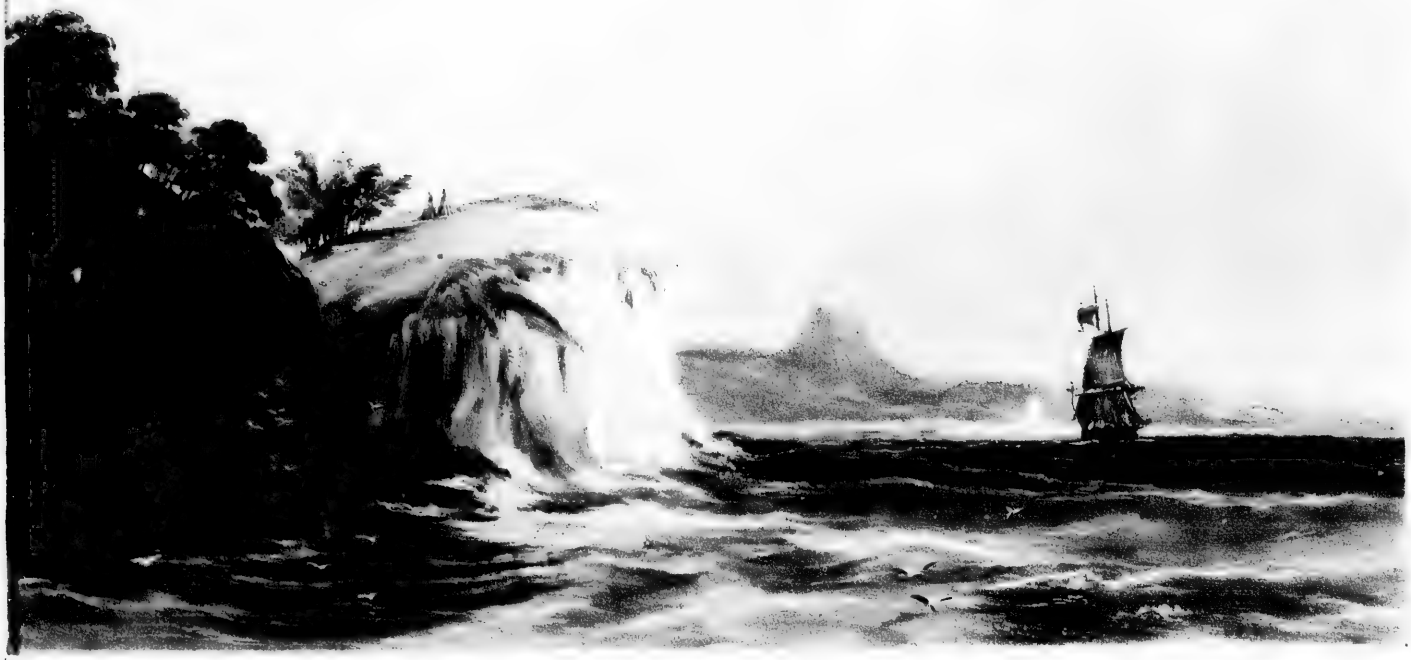

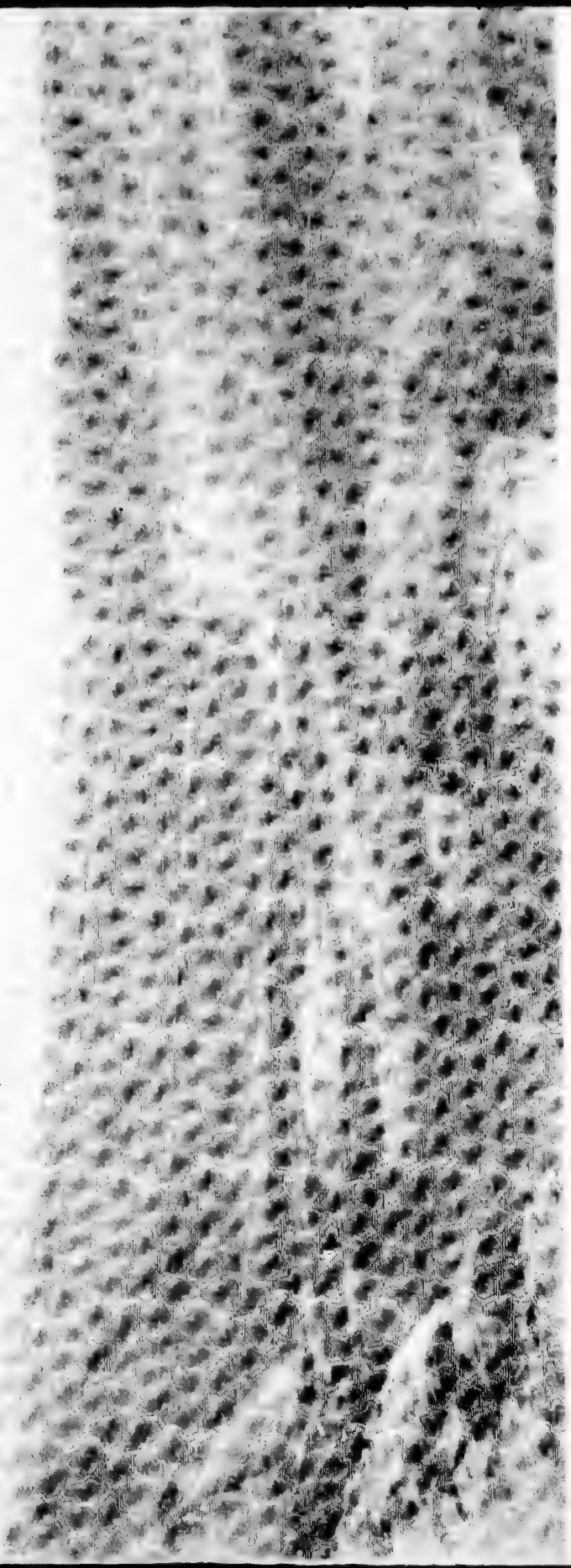

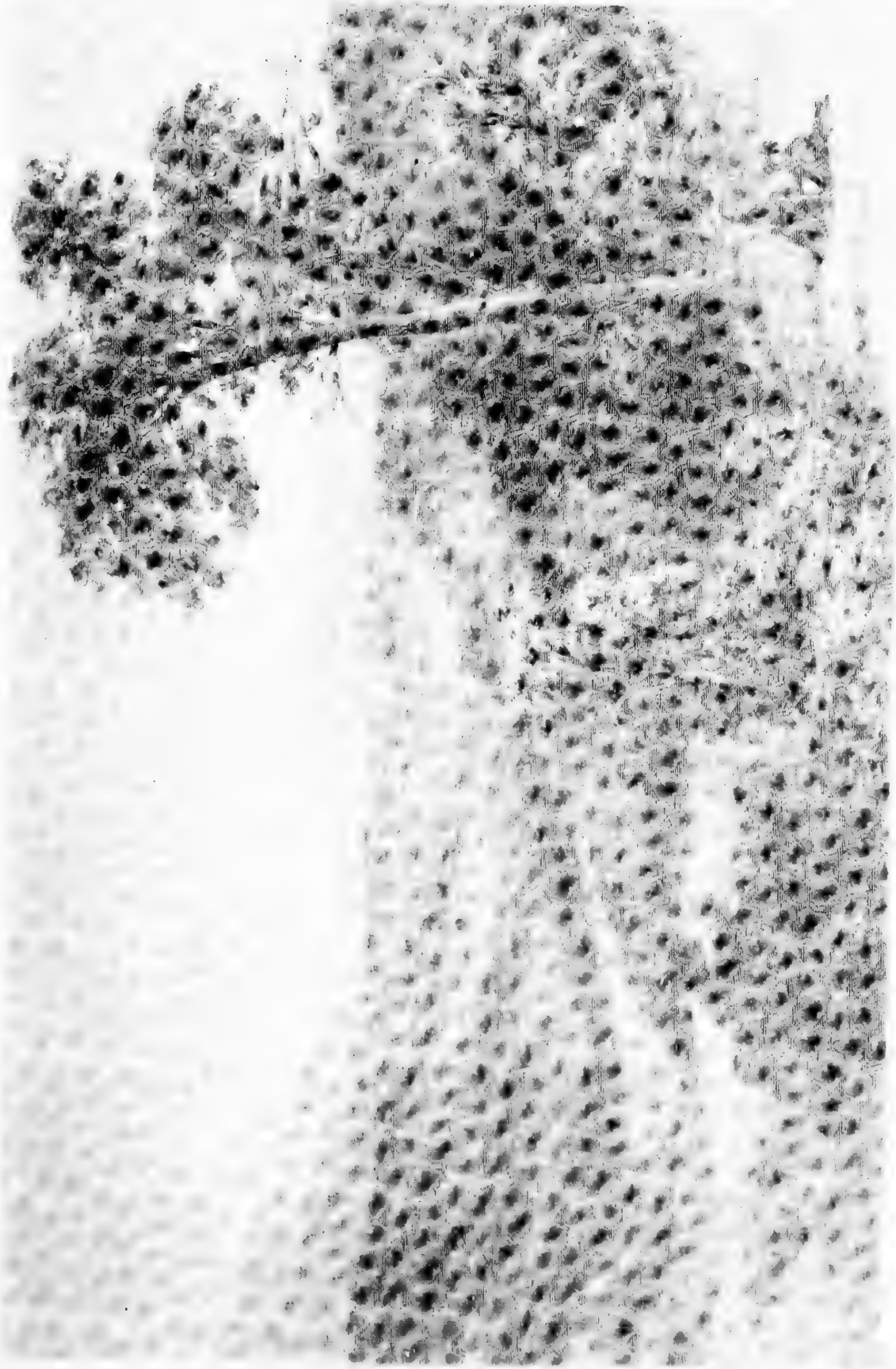

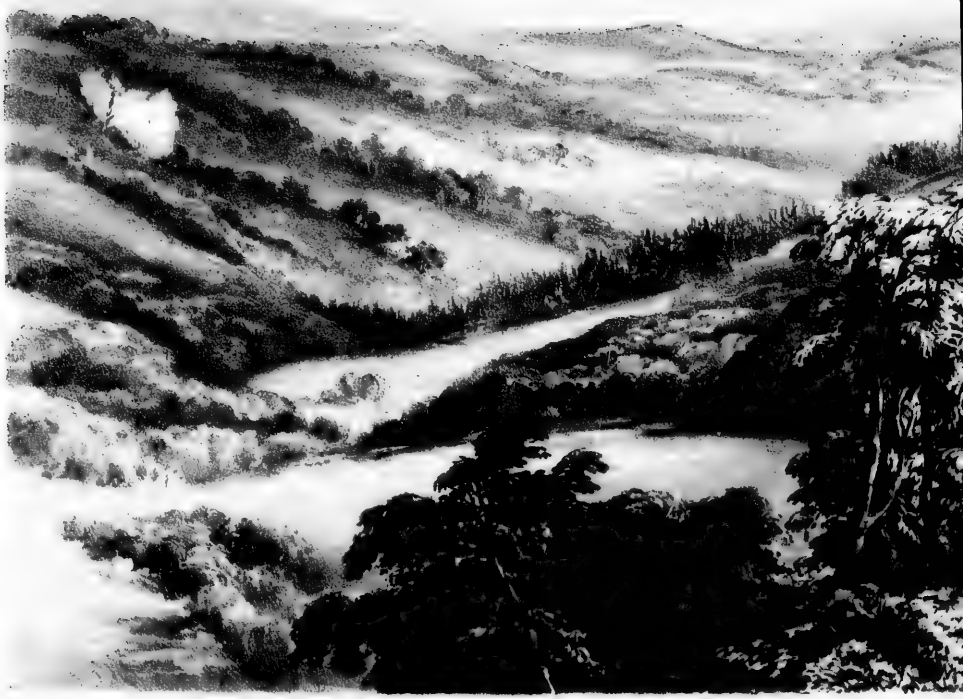

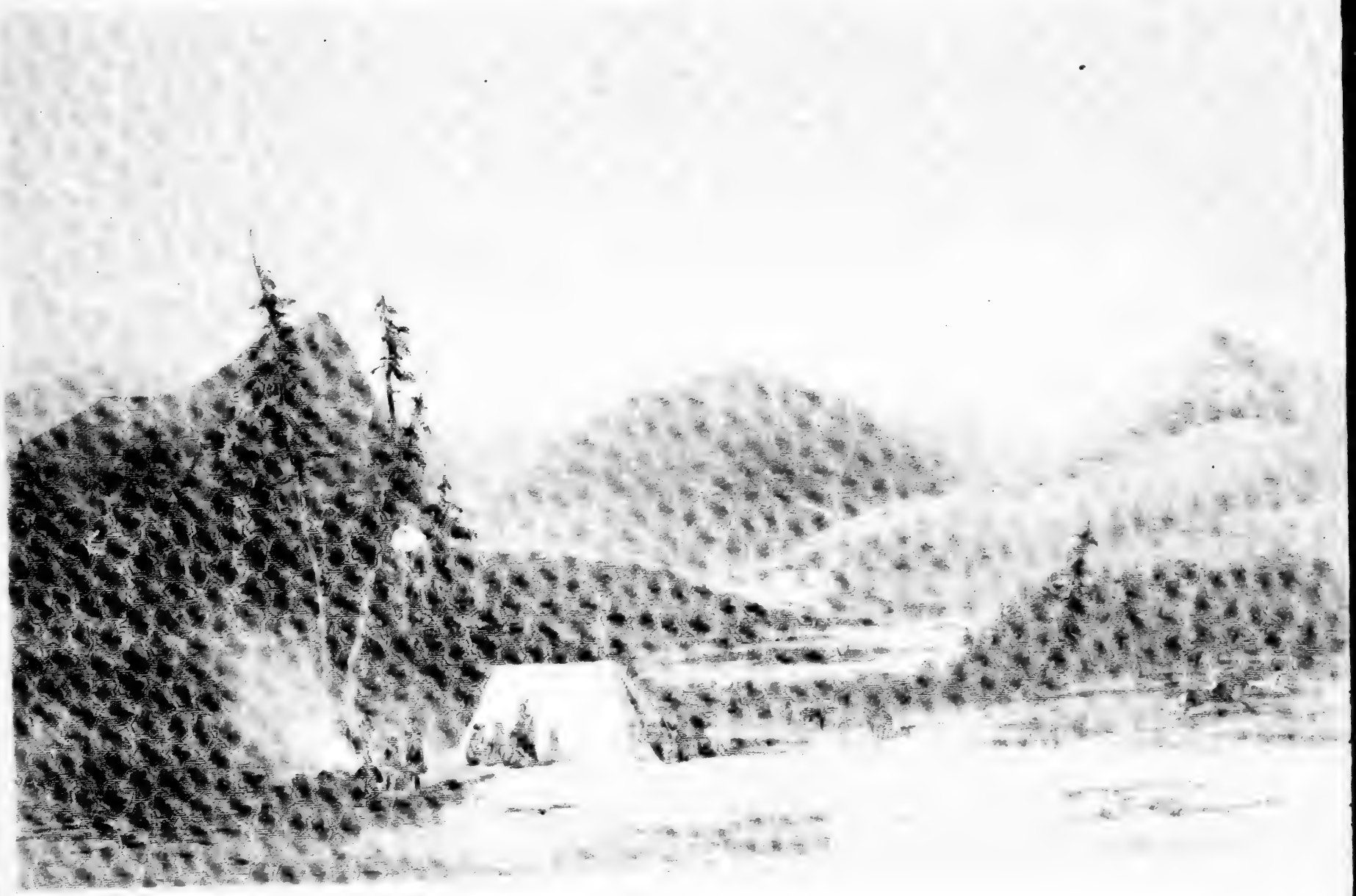

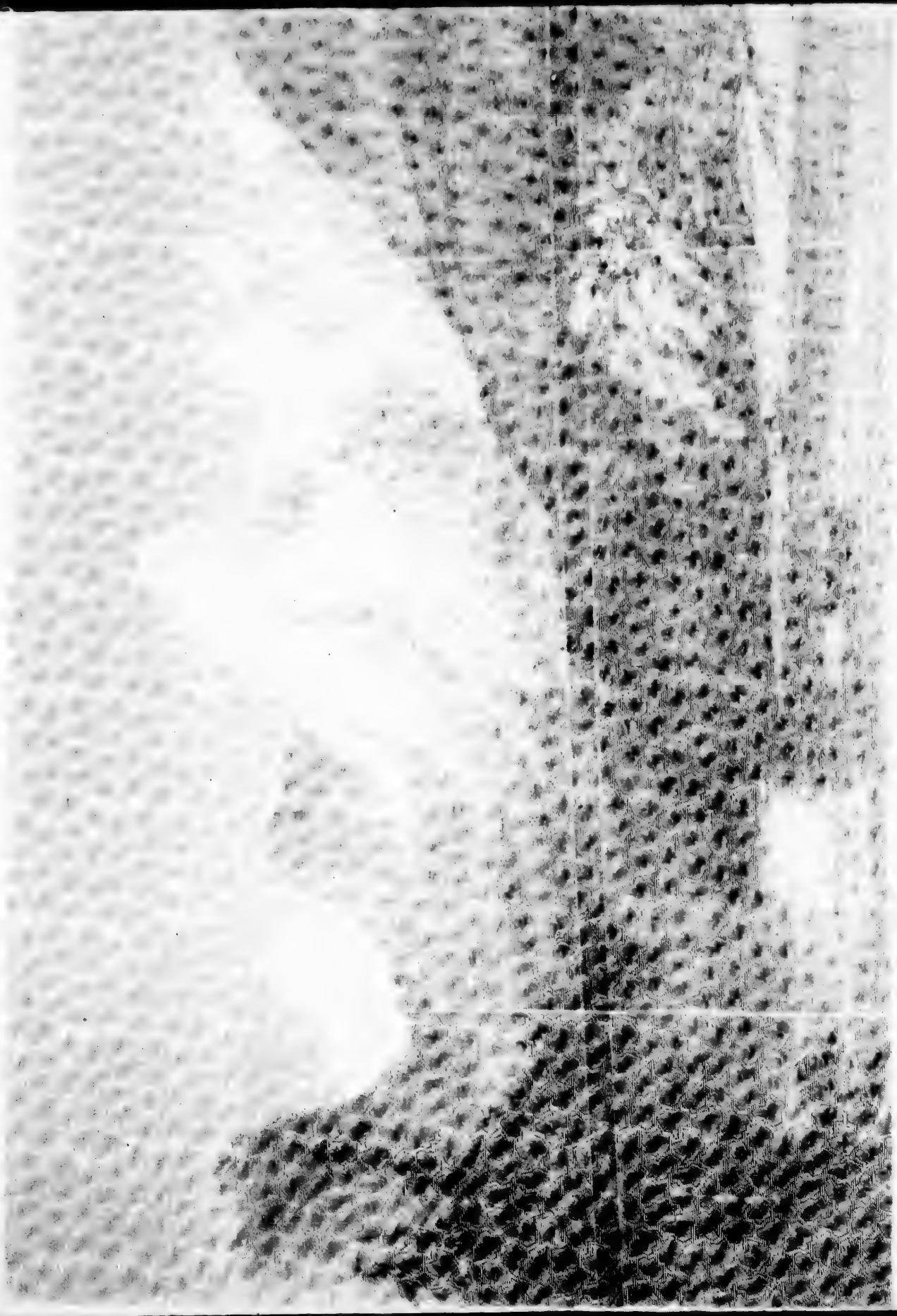

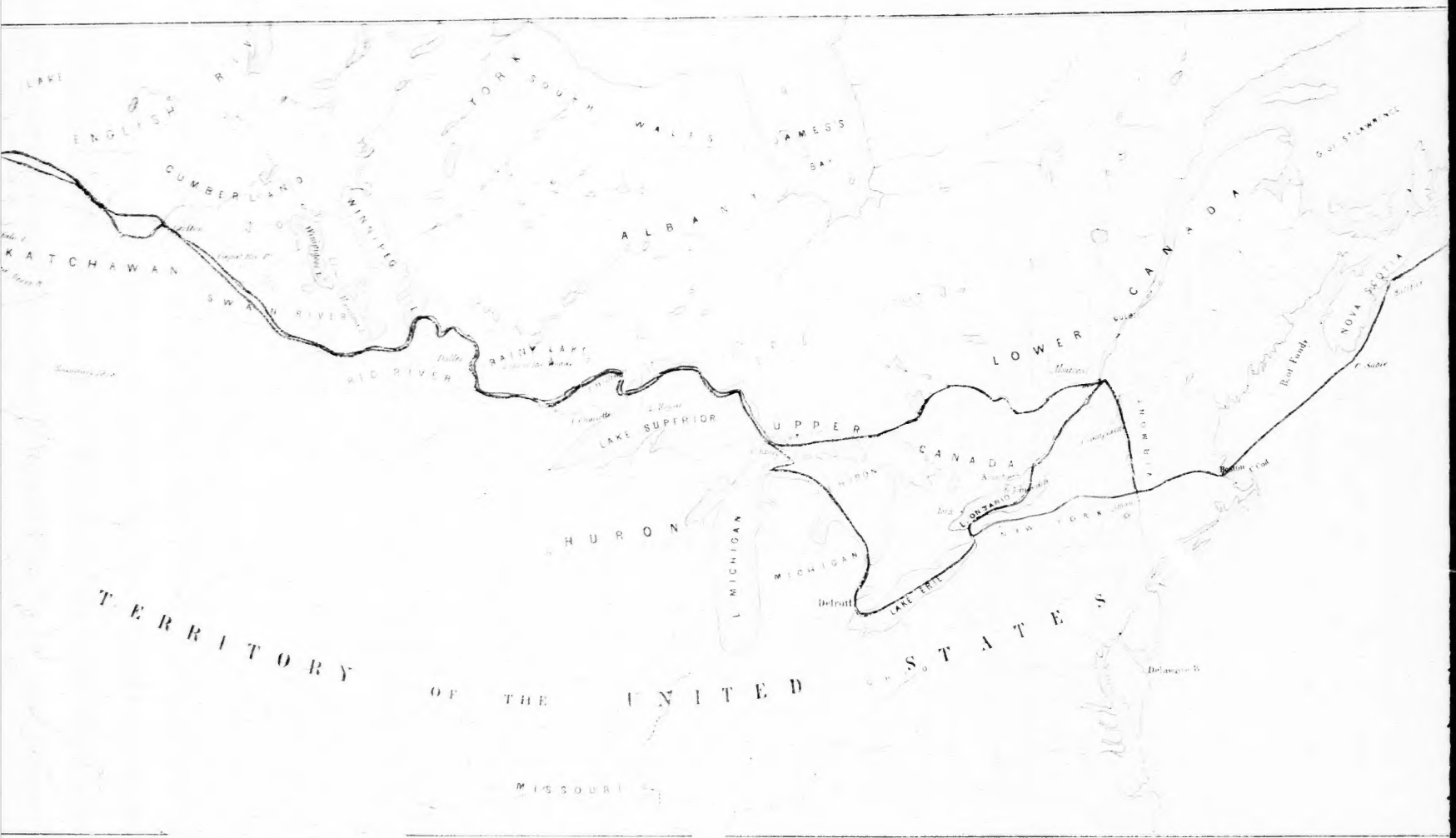
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NOVA SCOTIA
Bay of Fundy
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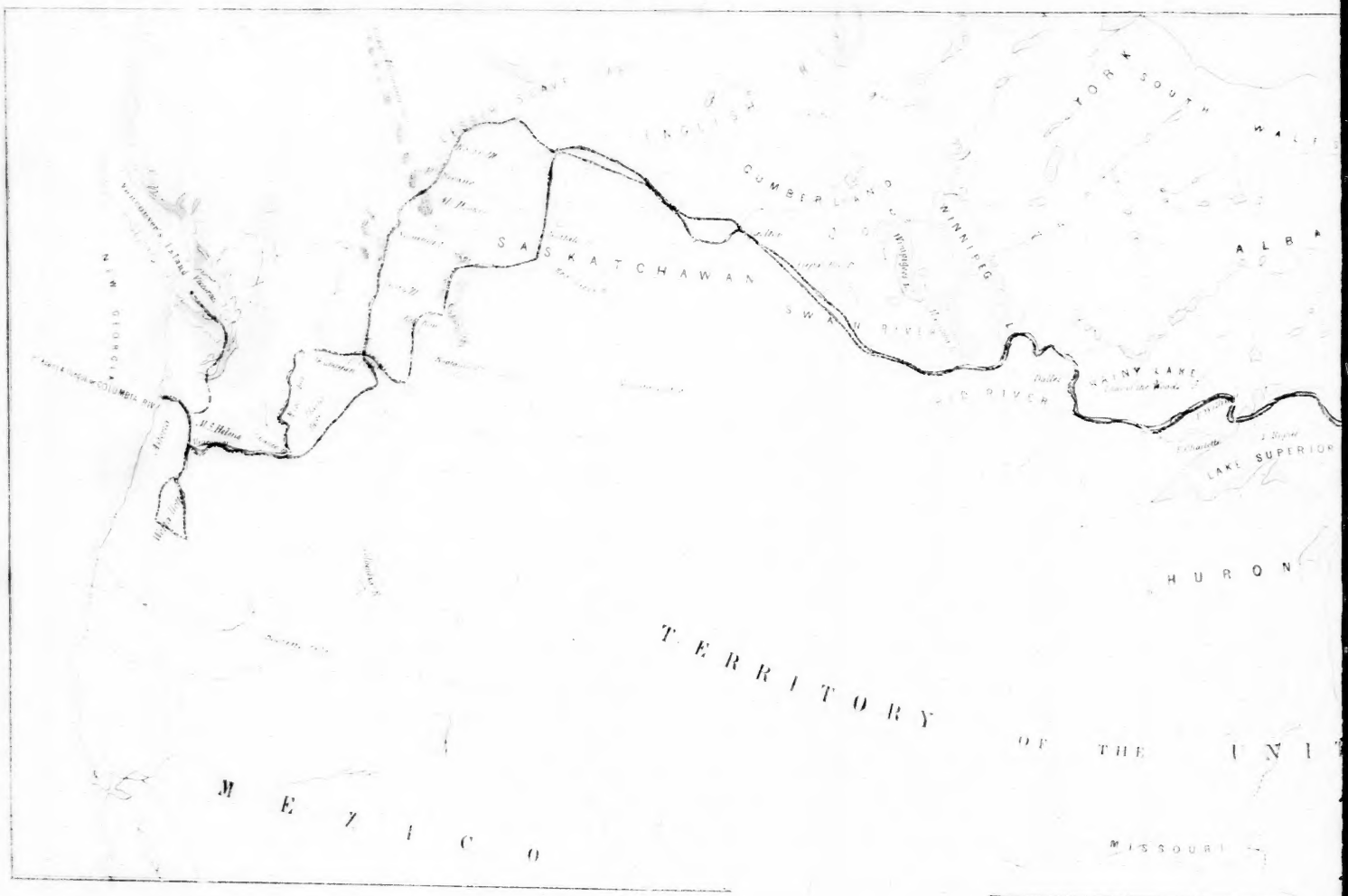
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